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The Impact Of Freshman Seminar On The Academic Social And Personal Development As Perceived By Students Completing The Course At Eastern Illinois University Fall Semester 1989

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Eastern Illinois University

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THE IMPACT OF FRESHMAN SEMINAR ON THE
ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS COMPLETING THE
COURSE AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FALL SEMESTER 1989

MESSER

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THE IMPACT OF FRESHMAN SEMINAR ON THE ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS COMPLETING
(TITLE)
THE COURSE AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FALL SEMESTER 1989

BY

MARGARET ANN KNAPP MESSER

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1993

YEAR

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THESIS ABSTRACT

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Term: Spring 1993

Department: Educational Psychology and Guidance

Degree: Specialist in Education

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Thesis Title: THE IMPACT OF FRESHMAN SEMINAR ON THE ACADEMIC, SOCIAL
AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS
COMPLETING THE COURSE AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FALL SEMESTER 1989

The purpose of this study was to examine the student perceptions of the impact of EIU 1001 Freshman Seminar on academic, social, and personal development seven semesters after they completed the course. Fifty nine of sixty-five remaining students, out of ninety-three who originally participated in the fall 1989 Freshman Seminar, returned a twenty-five item questionnaire and eleven of those students participated in personal interviews. Results showed 89.8% of subjects perceived Freshman Seminar to be helpful. All interviewees recommended the course to other students.

The qualitative design included a triangulation approach to provide rich verbal data from the interviews to construct three developmental themes: Involving and making friends, Academic growth, and Personal Development. Each theme was reinforced by the questionnaire responses, the interview results, and discussions in student development theory.

Dedicated to my Family with Love

My Parents: Calvin and Edith Knapp

My Children: Jeffrey, Jennifer, and Jana Messer

And especially my Husband: Dr. John M. Messer

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Charles Eberly for his ongoing support and patience as well as the sacrificial giving of his time throughout this endeavor. His willingness to provide guidance has won him a Distinguished Faculty Award in my heart.

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I greatly appreciate all the prayers and support from fellow researcher and graduate student, Todd Wright, and also from the men's prayer group, Bryan, Les and Jerry, and my Christian friends.

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My ultimate thanksgiving is extended to the Lord who gives strength and joy. My strength cometh from the Lord.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not on thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3: 5-6

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Why are educators expressing an increased interest in freshmen? Are efforts really underway to improve the quality of the freshman experience? A movement in higher education, called the freshman year experience, gained widespread credibility from the harsh reports criticizing undergraduate education, which followed the publication of A Nation at Risk, (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The freshman year experience is a concept of greater attention being placed on the freshman year to assist students in successful matriculation, and as a movement, has spread to Canada, Great Britain, and Australia.

John Gardner of the University of South Carolina, where the National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience is located, has cited a number of factors leading to the movement: many faculty genuinely care for freshmen for the sake of caring; the decline of traditional age students means more emphasis must be put on retaining freshman; the President's National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983-84 focused on the need for increased quality of high school graduates leading to greater need to remedy deficiencies during the freshman year of college; and decline of enrollment in some disciplines mean faculty are more open to teaching freshman seminar courses. Other factors identified by Gardner include: students are being viewed as consumers and treated with consumers' rights; with competition for students, focus is placed on their needs; since recruiting is expensive, efforts are made to retain

freshman; federal desegregation compliance agreements mean institutions must recruit and retain certain types of students; and the nature of a freshman is changing, with students more apt to be nontraditional, older, wiser, working, married, assertive, part-time, demanding, and less like freshmen of earlier generations (Gardner, 1986).

American institutions of higher education have seen a change in the availability of undergraduate students desiring to enter their halls of learning, due mainly to the decline in the birthrate after the post World War II Baby Boom Years (Upcraft, 1989). This shrinking of college-age cohorts began to be sharply felt in the early 1980s, and institutions of higher learning were forced to search for new clientele. Senior citizens, workers seeking career change, women who had deferred education for marriage and motherhood, and returning students now make up a large segment of the student population. In his essay, Who Are Today's Freshmen, (Upcraft, 1989, p. 15) Arthur Levine indicated that demographic trends of diversity in higher education will continue as the student body ages (current average age is twenty-six with an expected increase) and more minority students enroll. Larger numbers of minorities and students who were not formerly in the college bound curriculum track are choosing to attend college. This group of students, along with a growing number of older students (Stellenpohl and Shipton, 1986), make up the student population identified as non traditional students. This new cohort of non traditional students brings with them a unique set of problems such as lack of scholastic skills, less preparation for the demanded academic rigor of college, and lack of resources to secure needed help.

With fewer traditional-age students from which to draw, institutions of higher education often reduced their entrance requirements in order to maintain previous levels of student population. This reduction has led to the arrival of large numbers of new students who lacked many academic skills, as well as the shared intellectual backgrounds and values of the traditional middle-class, white, American college student (Gardner, 1981).

Along with the change in availability of traditional aged students has come a shift in the attitudes of college administrators toward them. With fewer students entering, there is the need for higher retention rates among those who do attend college. College administrators have been compelled to reevaluate strategies to attract more students in order to maintain institutional enrollment levels and to direct additional attention to methods facilitating freshman persistence to graduation. Widely used traditional orientation sessions, focusing on social introductions and lasting two to three days at the beginning of the school year or during the summer prior to the school year, were not adequately meeting the academic/career development needs of many students (Drew, 1990; Cohen and Jody, 1978).

The National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience has summarized the circumstances leading to the current focus on the needs of freshmen by institutions of higher education. These circumstances are:

1. The shrinking pool of traditional-aged, college-bound students and the multiple resulting effects of a true "buyers' market".
2. The influx of first-generation, socioeconomically

disadvantaged, and ethnic minority students into an educational system ill-prepared to meet their social, cultural, and academic needs.

3. The uneven, and often inadequate, academic preparation offered by the K-12 sector, and the resulting need for higher education to offer beginning students preparation in basic study skills and time management.
4. The concerns of the business community and the general public over academic "product quality": What does a baccalaureate degree guarantee? What can society reasonably expect from its college graduates? What are the components of quality higher education, and how can these components be best delivered?
5. The alarming college dropout rate which continues unabated and is at its peak during the freshmen year of college (Barefoot, 1992 p. 1).

Changes in admission criteria, complex remedial course sequences, and passivity of the peer culture toward success, were factors affecting the transition of students to college. Cohen and Jody (1978) identified three components to effect adaptation to college life. They are:

1. An attitudinal shift from passivity to assertiveness with regard to the educational system.
2. The possession of information about the resources of the institution and about the possibilities in the post-college world.

3. Competence in the scholastic skills necessary for success in academic courses (Cohen and Jody 1978 p. 2).

Awareness of transitional needs of entering students led administrators to explore ways to meet these needs. Reorganizations of the original socially-focused orientation programs expanded them to include more scholastic skills development to assist students in the process of adjusting to the demands of college life. Several models have been developed to facilitate this process and are being used very successfully. Over the years and across many types and sizes of institutions of higher education, data have shown that programs designed for entering students routinely increase retention and grade point averages for freshmen students (Fidler, 1992). The acculturation process of newcomers to the college scene through which they matriculate is described in the book Involving Colleges (Kuh et. al., 1991). The fourteen "involving" colleges attempt to ensure that each student has an opportunity to succeed.

Selected actions to improve the college experience especially during the freshman year include such approaches as: reform/modification of the entire undergraduate experience with emphasis on curriculum development; enhancement of academic advisement; development of freshman seminar/orientation courses; efforts to train faculty to perform academic support tasks such as advising; greater effort to use faculty rather than graduate students for teaching freshman classes; and improved orientation programs. Additional efforts included: improvement of undergraduate housing to promote living/learning environments; providing expanded

extracurricular and co-curricular activities to heighten the interest of students in the life of the institution; peer and/or career counseling; tutoring; early warning intervention systems; mentoring programs with faculty; special programs for unique populations of students; improved programs for parents of freshmen; effort to improve instruction in uniquely freshmen disciplines; and improved library/research orientation (Gardner, 1986).

Not only as a means of managing enrollment by retaining new students, but also as a means of involving students in the life of the institution, Freshman Seminar courses have demonstrated value. This study was designed to address student perceptions of developmental issues (social, academic, and personal) surrounding one university's initial offering of a Freshman Seminar course.

Need for the Study

As the successes of orientation programs became known, more and more institutions began incorporating them into their curriculum to help give incoming freshman every opportunity to matriculate. Eastern Illinois University, with an enrollment of 11,068 students, (EIU Planning Services, personal communication, April 15, 1993), for fall semester 1989, had explored methods to increase the retention level of students who entered as freshmen. The freshmen enrollment for fall semester 1989 at Eastern Illinois University was 1809 students. After much research into possible programs, a course proposal (Appendix E), was approved by the Council of Academic Affairs in December, 1988. The rationale for the course stated that: "This course is designed to meet the needs of freshmen students as

they make the transition to university life. Such a course seems particularly appropriate because of the traditionally high number of first generation students who attend Eastern Illinois University" (ETU 1001 Course Proposal).

The following fall, four sections of ETU 1001, Freshman Seminar, were offered at Eastern Illinois University. Enrollment was voluntary and was offered as an option for one semester hour of credit. Students were randomly informed of the course by their academic advisor as they registered for fall classes.

The evaluation/assessment of the course, a student opinion poll administered immediately after the last session at the end of the eight week course, was conducted in two parts. Part one assessed the impact of the course on retention rates and measurable academic success. The second part of the assessment dealt with students' perception of the impact of the course on their academic success using ETU 1001 Student Evaluation Form.

The four instructors for the course met weekly with the Freshman Seminar coordinator to maintain consistency in topics within the course. This also served to insure continuity in the design of the course through the comparison of instruction notes and shared experiences as the instructors encountered them.

A data base, managed by the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, maintained records on subsequent enrollment and academic performance. It indicated a higher than usual rate of retention for students opting to take ETU 1004 (Nichols, 1992) compared to other

students. However, there had been no follow up study planned to determine the value of the course as perceived by the students who had experienced it. This study was the first attempt at Eastern Illinois University to assess the reactions of students who matriculated the Freshman Seminar course during its first year at Eastern Illinois University. The goal of the study was to determine if and how the students perceived the course to have assisted them in their college experience.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Developmental theory is important in the design of programs for freshmen students to insure that needs are correctly identified and that procedures are being considered that will attempt to meet those needs. Elements of student development theory served as the theoretical framework and were used in assessing aspects of the EIU Freshman Seminar experience. Specific attention to the seven vectors of development of the young adult as identified by Arthur Chickering (1969) were addressed. He suggested that the college or university environment assist its students toward

1. developing competence
2. managing emotions
3. developing autonomy
4. freeing interpersonal relationships
5. developing purpose
6. establishing identity
7. developing integrity

Chickering's theories are an expansion of Erikson's eight stages of man. In stage four of his theory, Erik Erikson dealt with industry versus

inferiority in which the student prepares for acceptable roles in society, develops a sense of duty and accomplishment, acquires skills and knowledge, and develops the virtues of method and competence. In this theory, the developmental issues that most likely would be experienced by freshmen are: feeling comfortable in relation to one's physical and social surrounding; to feel integrated and at one with oneself; to develop a sense of psychosocial well-being; and to develop a core self-concept which provides a sense of sameness and continuity (Erikson, 1963).

John Gardner, one of the designers of the freshman seminar course, University 101, at the University of South Carolina, stated, concerning Chickering's vectors, "The nature of the present day world demands a concentrated focus on all seven facets of student development by institutions of higher education." (Gardner 1981). It is important that all aspects of the developing student be identified and attempts made to facilitate growth during the college experience. The curriculum model used in the design of EIU 1001 was the one developed at the University of South Carolina, named University 101. It addressed all seven of the vectors of development as contrasted with many other orientation programs which addressed only the first one, developing competence.

Another theory often related to the freshmen experience is the Involvement Theory, which indicated that "students learn by becoming involved" (Astin, 1985 pp. 133-134, as cited in Upcraft 1989).

Five postulates make up this theory. They are:

1. Involvement is the investment of physical and psychological energy in various "objects".

2. Involvement occurs along a continuum.
3. Involvement is both quantitative and qualitative in nature.
4. There is a direct relationship between student learning/personal development and the quality/quantity of student involvement in educational programs
5. Effectiveness of educational policy is directly related to the capacity of that policy to increase student involvement (Astin, 1985 as cited in Upcraft 1989).

The goals of EIU 1001 reflect the desire of the administration and university community for this course to address the needs associated with freshman students, and to assist students in the student development process.

Statement of the Problem

College courses to assist freshman students in the transition from high school to college have existed since the early 1970's. Studies have shown that these courses have helped students to persist and have increased the retention rate of those students taking the courses (Fidler, 1989, and Murphy, 1989). However, there has been no follow-up study of student perceptions of the course at Eastern Illinois University.

EIU 1001, better known as Freshman Seminar, was first offered at Eastern Illinois University in fall, 1989. The purpose of this study was to provide an opportunity for those students taking the course in fall, 1989, to respond to questions through the use of a printed questionnaire to determine their perception of the value of the Freshman Seminar course. Opportunity was given for students to participate in a more in-depth

response through a personal interview. Twelve self-nominated students were selected for interviews. An attempt was made to parallel selected demographic characteristics (sex, race, first generation in college) of the population; however, this was dependant upon the number and status of students who volunteered for the interviews.

Simply stated, the problem of this study was: How do students who matriculated Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University in Fall Semester 1989 perceive the course assisted them in their college experience?

Since many of these students were scheduled to graduate in spring 1993, the timing of the study was important as it becomes more difficult to locate students after they leave campus. Choosing to question the students during their senior year, rather than immediately following the course or even after sophomore and junior years, was an administrative decision. Based on students' needs for continued development, completing the study in the final semester of their college experience gave these students the optimum amount of developmental time and still secured the desired information prior to their graduation.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the relative perceptions of students regarding Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University, three years after they completed the course.
2. To determine the extent to which general objectives were met as perceived by students who completed the course during its

initial offering in fall, 1989.

3. To identify differences in perception of students based on gender, race, first generation college student status and ACT scores.

Limitations of the study

Limitations of the study included the willingness and ability of students who took the initial course of EIU 1001 to respond to the questionnaire. Another limitation related to the ability of the interviewers to remain neutral in the interviewing process and to direct questions in a manner not to influence responses. A final limitation of the study was identified as the population to be questioned; the number of students remaining on campus that have matriculated through EIU 1001 in fall 1989 who were available to provide data, compared to the original population of students who took the course.

Definition of terms

Terms defined for this study included:

1. Freshman Seminar - the course, EIU 1001, was designed to assist students in the transition to college life at Eastern Illinois University
2. University 101 - the name given to the course at University of South Carolina which served as the model for EIU 1001
3. scholastic skills - those attitudes and behaviors necessary for enacting successfully the role of student in and out of the classroom (Cohen and Jody 1978).

Summary

Eastern Illinois University has offered the Freshman Seminar course since fall 1989 and has collected data to support continuation of the program. This data has shown an increase in retention rates for Freshman Seminar enrollees compared to other Eastern Illinois University matriculated students. However, no follow up study has been completed to determine how students who have taken the course perceived it to impact their college experience. This study attempted to measure, through a group survey and personal interviews, the perceptions of students who took the initial offering of the course.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Overview of Freshman Seminar

Although the freshman year experience is seen by most educators as a phenomena of the last twenty years, the first freshman orientation course began in New England at Boston University in 1888. Iowa State offered a similar course in 1900. Both institutions recognized the need for providing special guidance for entering college students. The first orientation course offered for credit was at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, in 1911. In 1959, Harvard's contemporary freshman seminar was founded by David Riesman (Gardner, 1986).

Research Literature Specific to Freshman Seminar

The literature review for this study was limited to the topic of freshman seminar with some overlap into the cognate area of extended orientation courses as they related to the academic success and retention of freshmen students. An ERIC search of primary source literature related to freshman seminar between the years 1982 and 1992 identified forty two sources.

For the purposes of this study a broad review of relevant literature has been completed based on the foundations of informed professional opinion, philosophical assumptions associated with the freshman year experience and progressive education, and an increased use of student development theory in the design of programs to assist students to persist in college. The review proceeded from the most relevant to the more

general literature with criticism and limitations identified as appropriate. Reports were organized according to variables studied in relation to freshman seminar or extended orientation courses.

Relevant Literature

Research reports pertaining to freshman seminar typically reported positive outcomes. These reports were designed to measure variables related to the course ranging from increased retention rates, increased grade point averages, to higher personal and social adjustment levels of students participating in the course. The data for the majority of these studies were secured from existing student data bases at the institutions involved. In studies using control groups, the treatment group was the Freshman Seminar class, and the control group was made up of students of similar status, often matched pairs, who were not enrolled in the course.

Both empirical studies and student development theories support the idea that college freshmen experience many demands for intellectual, social, and personal adjustment (Martin, 1989; Lapsley et al, 1990; and Whitley, 1982; Stage and Williams, 1990). The freshman seminar course is one venue for helping students achieve the desired levels of personal and social adjustment for transition from high school to college. Positive results have been reported for students who have taken the freshman seminar course, revealing greater levels of adjustment (Friday, 1990; Meyer, 1991), higher grades (Maisto and Tammi, 1991), or higher student satisfaction than non-participating students.

Schwitzer measured the adjustment outcomes of freshman seminar participants using the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ),

a self-report measure of a student's perceived adjustment to college life. Pre and post-test t-test comparisons lead to positive results on the course satisfaction rating and the classroom environment scale. The data supported the use of freshman seminar as an intervention for promoting early adjustment to college life (Schwitzer, 1991).

Administrators in higher education are well aware of the need to provide guidance to incoming students in order to retain them after having successfully recruited them (Kramer et al, 1987; Upcraft et al, 1989; Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984). This emphasis on retention and assistance throughout the freshman adjustment period is being addressed by both public and private institutions and is particularly felt by engineering colleges wishing to bridge the gap between supply and demand for future scientists and engineers (Groccia and Harrity, 1991).

A study at Regis University, reported in The Chronicle of Higher Education, March, 1993, identified the need to boost retention and graduation rates and advocated an all-out effort to improve the quality of undergraduate life. A freshman seminar was added to the curriculum and was seen as a successful element in their strategy to increase the size of the freshman class. A thirty two percent increase from 234 students in fall 1991 to 309 students in fall 1992 was reported (Monaghan, 1993).

As retention rates were evaluated, and the freshman year experience became a more pronounced phenomenon, studies began to appear in educational journals comparing retention rates of students taking courses related to the freshman experience and control groups who did not take the

course. While most of these studies would appear to have a built in bias toward the course since it already existed at the various institutions, results were positive at most universities and colleges (Shanley and Witten, 1990; Davis, 1992; Harris, 1990; Lenning and Mohnkern, 1986). In a report from Ramapo College, Starke (1990) reported a seventy nine percent sophomore return rate as compared to a fifty one percent return rate for the sophomore year of those not taking the seminar. A study covering a sixteen year period (1973-1988) at the University of South Carolina, using chi-square analyses, revealed that participants in the freshman seminar course achieved a significantly higher sophomore return rate in eleven of the sixteen years (Fidler, 1991). In a similar study at the University of Maryland, one hundred percent ($n=44$) of participating seminar students registered for the spring semester while only seventy percent of the control group did so (McIntire et al., 1992).

As more students matriculated through school after having taken the freshman seminar course, and college administrators observed both short-term and long-term positive outcomes, an increase in the number of longitudinal studies appeared in the literature (Shanley, 1990; Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989; Stupka, 1992). Stupka (1992) conducted a statistical comparison of data related to the academic performance of two matched groups of college students after seven semesters. Sufficient evidence was found that clearly supported the notion that a student success course taken during the first semester had a positive, long term impact on academic performance and persistence. The dropout rate of the treatment group was significantly lower than that of the control group. Only half

as many students from the treatment group dropped out the first semester, and the control group completed 326% as many units of college credit as the control group.

At the University of South Carolina, Shanley (1990) measured differences between course participants and non-participants on variables of retention, persistence, and graduation rates through a longer period, seven years following freshman matriculation, using the student record data base. Among cohorts studied, results indicated that students enrolled in the course ($n=781$ 28%) had higher success levels in retention, persistence, and graduation rates, than did nonparticipants ($n=1995$, 72%).

In addition to studies resulting in findings of increased retention rates and positive student adjustment levels, several studies have shown an increase in the development of students' skill levels after participating in freshman seminar. Skill levels improved in the areas of communication, cognitive/critical thinking, academic responsibility, writing, research, time management, and vocabulary (Seaford, 1990; Holt & Eison, 1989; Brown, 1989; Frost, 1989; Upcraft et al, 1989; Gordon & Grites, 1984; Hopkins, 1988; Baumgarte, 1987; Woodward, 1982; Brown, 1981).

Reports such as these and others showing higher levels of adjustment for entering freshman who take college skills courses have lead to an increase in the number of institutions offering such courses. To help increase the number of students matriculating to graduation, other schools have incorporated procedures or seminars into an orientation process to better prepare students to persist to graduation. Research conducted by the National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience showed that

approximately sixty seven percent of American higher education institutions currently offered such a course (Barefoot, 1992). A similar report by E.L. Khawas (as cited in Gardner, 1986, p. 268) indicated that 77.8 percent of the 2,623 institutions reporting offered a course in "coping with college" (as cited in Gardner, 1986). These efforts come partially in response to cries for school reform such as A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), The Nation Responds (United States Department of Education, 1984), and America 2000. (United States Department of Education, 1991). While The Nation at Risk spelled out the problems of students being unprepared for college, The Nation Responds and America 2000 outlined measures such as improved methods at the high school level to meet college demands as well as a goal of ninety percent national high school graduation rate, gradual increase of entrance standards for some colleges, and procedures to make learning a lifelong process, all geared toward producing students who could succeed in American institutions of higher education. The Freshman Seminar courses, while not a direct result of these reform strategies, were an offshoot of efforts to assist students in persistence once they were accepted into college.

Most of the courses were designed as extended orientation programs to help students learn to be more effective in school which in turn improved student performance and retention rates. These courses carried many names such as Student Success, College Survival, College success, Freshman Seminar, Effective Student Behavior, or College Skills (David, 1988).

General Literature:**Curricular Models of Freshman Seminar as found in the literature:**

There have been many curricular models developed over the last decade to promote freshman orientation and freshman seminar activities in order to increase institutional retention rates and student success rates. Numerous textbooks have been written to accommodate these courses (Gardner and Jewler, 1992; Ellis, 1991; Gardner and Jewler, 1989; Ratherus and Fichner-Rathus, 1991; and Kanar, 1991).

Course content tends to be the determining factor for categorizing these courses into curricular models. Two separate studies, one by Barefoot (1992) and one by Murphy (1989), both placed courses dealing with the freshman experience into five different categories. Barefoot's (1992) classification scheme included:

1. Extended orientation seminars. These courses cover a blend of topics such as the purpose of higher education, introduction to the particular institution, current societal issues, management of time, money, personal freedom, and relationships, and academic skills.
2. Academic seminars with common content across sections. These courses often are in a core curriculum and are often required, may be interdisciplinary or theme-oriented, or may be more focused such as "great books".
3. Academic seminars with variable course content. Content for these courses will generally be determined by each instructor and will reflect an area of expertise or personal

interest.

4. Professional seminars. Offered within professional schools such as engineering, health sciences, and agriculture, such courses provide a focus on a specific major or career choice.
5. Study skills seminars. These seminars focus on the acquisition or improvement of basic study skills and are often offered at community colleges and open-admissions institutions (p.2).

Murphy's (1989) schema of freshman seminar models was very similar to Barefoot's with the exception of the last one, number five, which was an eclectic model drawing from several areas for intellectual content while the one described by Barefoot was a basic skills design. Murphy described the Eclectic Model as one which draws content from all the models and is not considered an orientation course but rather an academic course with much intellectual content (p.95).

Common Assumptions regarding Freshman Seminar

Murphy, from the University of South Carolina, stated that as these programs have spread, the following common assumptions have come to be held in regard to freshman seminar.

1. Staying in college is related to the ability to develop a sense of identification with the college and peer group.
2. This sense of identification which leads to commitment can be speeded up and enhanced by the freshman seminar, allowing the seminar to create bonding.

3. There are certain skills and knowledge that can be identified and taught that are associated with success in college.
4. Not all faculty are suited to teach the freshman seminar which requires additional training and commitment to the students (p. 92-93).

Other Creative uses of the Freshman Seminar Course

The freshman seminar concept is not as strong at two year colleges. In two studies (Rice, 1991; Corley, 1990), the evaluation of such courses showed that they were not as extensively utilized as they were at four year colleges. Rice (1991) noted that the two-year college Freshman Seminar differed in content and focus where they served more to ameliorate academic deficiencies than to develop personal/social aspects of students. Corley (1990) indicated that the course did provide the opportunity for faculty interaction and peer friendship (both being indicators of student success) and the significance of the course was the strengthening of personal goals of the students participating in the course. At LaGuardia Community College, (New York) the seminar was used as a career development module directed toward educational and career planning (Rodriguez, 1987).

Various creative approaches to the course have been taken. "The Psychology of Mushrooms" was designed to teach the principals of perception, learning, social, and abnormal psychology (Sommer, 1989). It was also used to integrate cultural diversity concepts into the curriculum (Hilson, 1990). William Patterson College of New Jersey introduced the Greek language as part of the freshman seminar course (Kresky, 1979).

Negative Reviews

Very few negative reports were found regarding freshman seminar. One report from Pennsylvania State University indicated that the course led to more favorable attitudes by students, but they made no perceptible differences in performance or rates of student retention (Evaluation-Review, 1982).

A report from the College of Wooster (Heller, 1992) criticized the seminar program for focusing its content on racism and sexism in United States Society. Critics saw the seminar as a left-wing attempt to ensure "political correctness" after the administration chose a three year theme for the course, "Difference, Power, and Discrimination".

Summary

The traditional orientation program, approximately two days in length, seems to make little difference in student adjustment to college. Martin (1989) reported that results of a study measuring effects of freshman orientation and locus of control on adjustment to college did not support the hypothesis that students who attended orientation were significantly more well-adjusted to college life at mid-semester than were nonattenders.

However, at the University of New Hampshire, Gass (1990) reported a twelve percent higher retention rate for students attending a five day adventure orientation program than for the students in the control group who did not attend the program.

While these results seem to differ, the results of studies evaluating the longer (eight to fifteen week) freshman seminar course

remain relatively consistent. Freshman seminar courses assist students in being successful in college. Most of the studies leading to positive results have been conducted using data bases of student records and control groups of similar students who have not participated in the courses. Student perception concerning their experience was never addressed in the studies. Summative student evaluations were traditionally conducted at the end of the term in which the student took the course rather than at the end of the college experience.

The Contribution of this Study to the Literature

This study measured the perception of students who participated in the freshman seminar at Eastern Illinois University three years after they had taken the course, to determine if they perceived it to have impacted their development and life as a student. The findings of this study can add a student's perspective to the value of freshman seminar and may be useful to administrators as they debate implementing such a program at their institution.

A high percentage of the sample, 89.8%, responded positively when asked if they perceived Freshman Seminar to have been useful. All of the eleven interviewees said they have recommended the course to other incoming freshmen.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

General Method

The method for this qualitative research project included opinion polling followed by personal interviews with selected participants to determine, report, and interpret the behaviors, beliefs, or intentions of specified groups of persons (Mauch and Birch, 1989). Specifically, the beliefs of students having taken ETU 1001 during Fall Semester, 1989, were assessed to determine, report and interpret the perceived impact of the course on the quality of their collegiate experience.

Instrument Development

Two data collection instruments were developed for the study. One was a survey designed for administration to all available ETU 1001 students, and one was an interview protocol designed to be used with survey respondents who volunteered to be interviewed for further information about their Freshman Seminar experience.

Survey Development

Following meetings with the Freshman Seminar Coordinator, and faculty who have taught the course, a local survey was developed for use in the study. Items were created which specifically addressed attainment of the course objectives specified in the original course proposal approved by the University's Council on Academic Affairs for ETU 1001. Other instruments, such as the College Outcome Measures Program of ACT (The American College Testing Program, 1991), the Freshman Survey

developed at the University of South Carolina (Paul P. Fidler, personal communication, January 9, 1990) an attitudinal survey of faculty at the University of Wyoming (Reeve et al, 1992), and the Course Evaluation SLS 1101 College Survival questions from North Campus, Miami-Dade Community College (Belcher et. al., 1987), were reviewed for use in this study, but all failed to meet the defined need: to measure the perceived impact of Freshman Seminar on students' collegiate experience.

The preliminary instrument was critiqued by graduate students participating in an educational research foundations course, and a panel of five 1990-91 entering students who also were enrolled in Freshman Seminar in fall, 1990. Both groups were asked to respond to instrument format, item form, and overall content, given the purposes of the study. This procedure served to assess the perceived content validity of the questionnaire instrument.

The final researcher-developed survey instrument employed a five point Likert-type scale of twenty-five items assessing topics identified as course objectives, and an additional four items requesting demographic information (Appendix A). The first question asked respondents if the course influenced their "decision to remain in college" (item one). Four items assessed whether freshman survival skills, such as financial management (item 8), note taking skills (item 18), test taking skills (item 19), and time management skills (item 20), were acquired.

Two items questioned whether the course assisted the students in becoming more involved in campus activities (item 2) and finding resources on campus (item 6). Assessment of the course in "finding a support group

of peers with whom I could examine common problems (item 3), "making friends within the university environment" (item 4), dealing with roommates (item 11), and understanding dating relationships (item 13), focused on developing relationships.

Positive or negative attitudes towards professors (item 24), the teaching/learning process (item 22), and Eastern Illinois University (item 5), were assessed in the questionnaire. All other items were associated with enhancing the development of students. The internal consistency reliability determined by Cronbach's Alpha procedure for the twenty-five Likert-style items was .9183.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol (Appendix B) was developed to elicit students' responses to specific elements involved with their Freshman Seminar experience. Among these were: What do you perceive to be the most significant topic of Freshman Seminar?; How did Freshman Seminar impact your college experience?; What growth experiences do you perceive to be a result of Freshman Seminar?; and In what ways do you believe that Freshman Seminar is meeting the desired goals?

Research Population

The research population consisted of all students who took the Freshman Seminar, EIU 1001, during Fall Semester, 1989. Four classes were offered with a limited enrollment of twenty five students per class. Ninety three freshmen enrolled in Freshman Seminar, EIU 1001, fall 1989. Sixty three (68%) of those enrolled were females, thirty (32%) were males, and six (6%) of the population were minorities. All six minorities were

black.

The study attempted to reach all students who were still enrolled at Eastern Illinois University in Spring, 1993, seven semesters after their matriculation, who were a part of this population. A sample of 65 persisting students identified by name, social security number, gender, and ethnic origin was provided by an administrator in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. ACT score was secured from existing data files for the sample of 65 persisting students but data was not available for the 28 students who were not enrolled at Eastern Illinois University at the time of the study.

The sample consisted of 22 males and 43 females, including a minority sample of 5 black students; 3 females and 2 males.

Due to the lack of demographic comparisons for the remaining 28 students the sample of students surveyed may not be representative of the original population of students who were enrolled in EIU 1001 in fall, 1989.

Procedure

The students participating in the survey were mailed postcards (Appendix C) on January 19, 1993, announcing that they would soon receive an evaluation survey in their mail dealing with their experiences in EIU 1001, and encouraging them to participate in the study. The postcard explained the study, its purpose, and how data collected were to be used. On January 25, 1993, survey instruments were mailed to all six five available students. A paragraph of instruction preceded the survey and students were requested to return the surveys by January 29, 1993. After

a period of one week, the researcher and a qualified graduate student employee working for the Coordinator of Freshman Seminar contacted students by telephone to administer the survey. A total of 14 students were administered the survey by this second, telephone method. As of March 16, a total of fifty nine students completed the survey for a sample return rate of 90.7%.

Item 29 of the survey asked students if they would be willing to provide a more detailed description of the impact of EIU 1001 on their college experience through a one-on-one interview. A total of 24 respondents indicated they would be willing to be individually interviewed, and a sub-set of 12 people were subsequently randomly selected by the researcher for in-depth interviews. Eleven of twelve scheduled interviews were completed. An interview procedure was agreed upon by the researcher and the graduate student employee to insure consistency of methods by both individuals doing the in-depth interviewing. The interviews were carried out between March 1 and March 17, 1993.

At the beginning of each interview, students were explained the purpose of the study, and requested to sign an interview permission form (Appendix D). Immediately after each tape recorded interview, a transcript was prepared by the researcher or the graduate employee who did the interviewing, and mailed to each student for verification of their responses. After interview transcripts were verified by student participants and returned, they formed the data for the content analysis carried out by the researcher, using standard qualitative analysis

techniques (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993).

Treatment of the Data

Survey data were reported by frequency of response. The Pearson product moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between the independent variables of gender, race, ACT, first generation student status, and overall perception of Freshman Seminar as useful. Selected demographic characteristics were also used as independent variables in a Chi Square test of independence analysis, with survey responses used as dependent variables (Minium and Clark, 1982). Characteristics included for analysis were ACT scores, status as first generation college students, gender, and race. The level of statistical significance set for this study was .05. The data were entered into a standard statistical analysis program, and reviewed for reasonableness by the Director of Testing Services at Eastern Illinois University.

As stated above, interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and verified by student interviewees. Using standard qualitative analysis procedures (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993), the interviews were coded by the researcher for purposes of a qualitative content analysis. Developmental themes found in these verbal descriptions of college life were identified via a pattern seeking technique. These themes were then compared to those found in student development theory, particularly the work of Chickering (1969), for persons aged eighteen through twenty-two. Developmental themes were identified using comments obtained from personal interviews conducted with eleven of the original fifty nine students who responded to the questionnaire. Inductive analysis was used to identify

themes from the interviews through a pattern seeking technique. These themes were then compared to those found in student development theory for persons ages eighteen through twenty-two to find similarities.

Procedures

When the review of literature revealed no available instrument for obtaining perceptions of students regarding Freshman Seminar, a researcher developed questionnaire was mailed to the survey sample. The twenty-five items gave students an opportunity to respond on a five point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, measuring their perception of assistance the topics covered in the Freshman Seminar course had provided them during their college experience. One-on-one interviews were carried out with the researcher or an assistant with eleven of the students who indicated on the questionnaire their willingness to participate in an interview. The questionnaire (appendix A) was mailed to students on January 25, 1993.

Responses to item twenty six: Who was your instructor in Freshman Seminar?, were not included in the data. This question should be removed from the questionnaire if the study is to be replicated. Reference to instructors by name has been avoided to insure confidentiality of subjects.

Only students who indicated a desire to participate in an interview were contacted for that purpose. Twenty-four students indicated a willingness to do so. Names were selected randomly from this group to secure twelve interviews. One student failed to keep the interview appointment resulting in eleven students participating. The responses from the interviews made up the segments which lead to the categories used

in the theme development.

The themes were compared to the student development theory as described by Chickering (1969) and Erikson (1963) to identify similarities between the theories and the constructed themes.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of students who participated in the original Freshman Seminar class offered at Eastern Illinois University, to determine how they perceived its impact on their college experience. To obtain the necessary data, a questionnaire was sent to the sixty-five students enrolled at Eastern Illinois University seven semesters after they had taken the course. Fifty nine students responded to the survey. Eleven of the fifty nine students participated in one-on-one interviews.

Research Question

The research question addressed in this study was: How did students who matriculated Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University in Fall Semester 1989 perceive the course to assist them in their college experience?

Perceived achievement in the areas of social, academic, and personal development were explored using the data collected. Similarities between these achievements and those described in student development theory were investigated.

Developmental Themes

The ultimate goal of the qualitative element of this study was to discover themes as they related to the perceptions of students enrolled in EIU 1001 Freshman Seminar in Fall 1989. The technique used for theme

seeking was triangulation, a cross-validation technique between data source, data collection strategies, and theoretical schemes (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993). The data sources consisted of the responses to the questions on the survey, the responses to the questions asked in the eleven follow up interviews, and the themes observed in current literature and student development theory as they pertain to freshman students.

The base for theme building was constructed with statements extracted from the eleven personal interviews. These statements, referred to as segments, were sorted into topics. There was a potential to have twenty five topics corresponding to the twenty five items on the questionnaire. However, as the segments were clustered according to subject and assigned to the questionnaire items to which they were most closely associated, only twelve topics emerged.

The twelve topics were:

1. becoming more involved in various types of campus activities (e.g. student government, student clubs, cultural events, intramural, etc.).
2. finding a support group of peers with whom I could examine common problems.
3. making friends within the university environment.
4. finding resources on campus to help solve problems.
5. improving group communication skills, especially verbal assertiveness.
6. improving note taking skills for other classes.
7. improving time management skills.

8. enhancing my self-esteem.
9. enhancing my growth as a student.
10. developing better relationships with my roommates.
11. developing more positive attitudes toward university faculty.
12. being more accepting of individuals with values that differ from my own.

The topics were then sorted into five categories. The categories were:

1. Becoming involved in organizations and making friends.
2. Finding resources on campus.
3. Improving academic skills.
4. Experiencing personal growth and adjustment.
5. Developing positive attitudes towards others.

From the categories, three themes emerged. These themes were:

1. Involvement and Making Friends
2. Academic Growth
3. Personal Development

Theme 1: Involvement and Making Friends

The theme, Involvement and Making Friends, emerged from the category, Becoming involved in organizations and making friends. There were twenty nine segments of information from the interviews relating to becoming involved in activities and developing friendships. The verbal data carried an underlying message that making friends was important to responding students during the freshman year and that becoming involved in

various activities provided an avenue for social development.

The theme for social development is evident as colleges strive to improve their social climates (Monaghan, 1993). Higher education administrators are making an effort to encourage social development on campus (Kuh, 1991) and Freshman Seminar courses have been an effective method in meeting the socialization needs of new students (Barefoot, 1992).

Becoming involved in collegiate activities and socializing/making friends were recognized as elements of student development theory. Astin (1985) referred to student involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Upcraft, 1989 p. 51) and indicated that it occurred along a continuum meaning that varying amounts of time and energy might be expended on differing objects at different times.

The vector, freeing interpersonal relationships, as described by Chickering (1969) acknowledged the need for an increased tolerance for others, a capacity for intimacy, and relationships based on trust, independence, and individuality. Erikson's (1963) theory identified a need for college aged students to find acceptable roles in society and to feel comfortable in one's physical and social surroundings.

It is clear from a theoretical standpoint that involvement in activities and making friends in a social context are important elements of the developmental process for adolescent college students. The comments from the interviews and the responses to the questionnaire substantiate the theories.

Category 1: Becoming Involved in Organizations and Making Friends

Three survey items combined to form the category of becoming involved in organizations and making friends. They were:

1. Becoming more involved in various types of campus activities: questionnaire response of 37/59 favorable and 22/59 questionable to negative (item 2).
2. Finding a support group of peers with whom I could examine common problems: questionnaire response of 37/59 favorable and 22/59 questionable to negative (item 3).
3. Making friends within the university environment: questionnaire response of 53/59 favorable and 6/59 questionable to negative (item 4)

Insert Table 1 about here

The comments from the interviews reflect the importance of involvement and friendships to the incoming freshman student. The segments which fed into this category and then into the theme follow:

Topic 1. becoming more involved in various types of campus activities (e.g. student government, student clubs, cultural events, intramural, etc.).

"It made me more aware of the services that were available and more familiar with the different things on campus, like organizations, and Greek groups."

"I'm involved with the Council of Student Services for the Library and also a Greek sorority."

"I joined a sorority and the class helped me make that

decision."

"By taking this course it has made people more aware of the types of groups on campus and how to get involved. My instructor had people come in from other organizations to talk to us and that gave us a feel of what was available to us and what we could get involved in."

"Oh we did a lot of things. Let me think. For some reason, I didn't think it was all that important to me but some lady...Sandy Gallion, came in and talked about alcohol awareness and everyone was supposed to give five words for people who were drunk and everybody just threw out words; another name for it and I just remember that. We did others that meant more to me but I can't remember what they were."

"It made me aware of the groups that were out there although I didn't join them. I was involved in intramural, NRHH (National Resident Hall Honorary), and I am on three professional committees and an RA."

"You don't find out about some of this stuff until you've been here a long time. If you find out about it early you can't go wrong."

"Freshman Seminar impacted my desire to be involved in leadership roles. I'm in the Model United Nations Club, the Public Administration Association Club, and I'm an RA assistant."

"Freshman Seminar helped me with the decision to become a sweetheart for a fraternity and to be aware of other organizations."

"I'm a member of ACEI and Christian Campus Fellowship. I think it helps the freshmen become more comfortable in the college setting and just getting to know the different parts of the campus really helps a lot."

"I think one of the topics we went over was all the organizations on campus and like a speaker who talked about the Greek organizations, fraternities, and sororities and then we had someone from BACCHUS and talked about all the things BACCHUS did."

"I didn't know if I wanted to go to the rush activities and it helped me to make up my mind. I was also on hall council. Freshman Seminar made me more confident with associating with other people and helped me to do that."

"I think it just made me a lot more aware of what was on campus and got me out to see some of the things that were available rather than finding out eventually when it might have been too late."

Topic 2. finding a support group of peers with whom I could examine common problems.

"I really think it helps new students relate to other students because everyone is coming into the class as new on campus and we all had lots of questions."

"This one might be kind of trivial but when the exam schedules came out in the paper, none of us knew how to figure out when to take our exams so we spent a great deal of the class time that day talking about the exam schedule. That was important to us at that time."

"You realize that other people are actually having the same problems you are."

"I loved the class and it was different and it was comfortable when you were a freshman. You need a class like that. You are so intense when you get down here and especially if you're on your own and in a class like that, you feel comfortable and it sets you in the right direction."

"You know what I really liked the most about it was that you had people in the class who were going through the same type of things that I was. You know, so I didn't feel stupid to ask questions and they didn't seem like they were embarrassed."

"It was really nice to have people in my class who had some of the same feelings that I had about leaving home for the first time."

"It gets the freshmen together in a group with their peers who are in the same situation and helps them muddle through the same things together. I think it really does help out. When you come to a campus like this and you have never been away at college before, it can be kinda scary sometimes; you may not realize what's out there."

Topic 3. making friends within the university environment.

"It helps you meet new people and that helps when you're a freshman."

"It impacted my friendships. It was a good way to meet new people. The class was different. It was more relaxed than some of my other classes and it was a comfortable way to get to know people."

"The biggest impact was in meeting people. I met people in that class that I still see on campus today. I made a lot of friends from that group, partly because of all the group discussion we had in class. That really helped us get to know one another."

"It was neat to see some of the girls from Freshman Seminar class also involved in my sorority and other activities as I've gone through college."

"Definitely I benefited from it because of the people in that class. You got to know the people more than in your other classes. You know, you interacted a lot with them so you knew who they were and I made a lot of friends that way that I still talk to. There ain't a whole lot of 'em that are still on campus but the ones that are, I still talk to them and I made a lot of friends and that kinda helped me. It's good as a freshman to meet people."

"If you're having a hard time making friends in Carman Hall or where ever you live I mean, I really didn't have a problem but here's a good way for people who are, to get a good base of people where they are going to make friends. And that, I feel is very important. You know some people need a little nudge to get out and try things and that's what college is all about. Those are the people I've had on my floor that I've recommended this class too; the people who didn't know much about how the campus run. I know someone comes in and discusses the greek organizations. And this one guy from our group, I don't know if it was because of the class but he ended up rushing Sig Nu. I didn't talk to him in quite awhile."

"There were not many students in there so we got to know one another really quick."

"It helped me meet people quicker for some reason. Most of that class I'm still friends with today. It helped me to talk to people easier, to be more open and made me more comfortable on campus I guess."

"I got to meet people. I knew everyone in my Freshman Seminar class and I still see those people on campus and we joke about how we had class together that first semester, way back then."

"It made you get to know a small group of freshmen like really well, and made me aware of all the different organizations and facilities on campus."

"I met a lot of people in that class that I still know now. I don't associate with them on an everyday basis but I do know names and faces from the class and whenever I see them it always comes up in conversation about the class and the things we did."

Theme 2: Academic Growth

Academic Growth was the second theme that emerged. The two categories that contributed directly to this theme were Finding Resources on Campus and Improving Academic Skills. Eighteen segments of information from the interviewees referred to accessing facilities or resources at Eastern Illinois University and seven segments dealt with specific academic skills that were learned or improved as a result of the Freshman Seminar class.

There is no doubt that college administrators and educators desire academic growth in students. Mission statements and course objectives often reflect the goal of increasing academic growth of recruited students. Barefoot (1992) identified the improvement of academic skills as a common element of Freshman Seminar. The skills noted in the literature associated with Freshman Seminar included critical thinking skills, metacognition, acculturation (Brown, 1989), writing skills (Holt, 1989), study/time management skills (Gordon 1984), and analytical thinking (Seaford 1990).

Acquisition of skills and academic growth leads to intellectual development. Gordon (1984) cited William Perry's intellectual and developmental theory as appropriately definitive of freshmen. They are

dualistic in entering college with certain expectations that are not always fulfilled. They tend to see people, knowledge and values as absolute, and they are passive learners who rely on authorities for "right" answers.

Two vectors of Chickering's theory (1969) are applicable to academic growth. These two vectors, developing competence and clarifying purposes, indicate a need for students to cope intellectually and to develop a sense of purpose in their lives. The segments from the interviews revealed that academic growth had taken place.

Category 2: Finding resources on campus

One item, finding resources on campus to help solve problems, received eighteen comments, making it a category leading to the theme Academic Growth.

4. Finding resources on campus to help solve problems:

questionnaire response of 58/59 favorable and 1/59
questionable to negative (item 6).

Topic 4. finding resources on campus to help solve problems.

"We toured the library and learned about the resource center. That was very helpful. It helps you get familiar with the things at EIU."

"Knowing about the available resources on campus was very beneficial both then and later as I had to know where things were."

"I think the most significant part of that class was the library tour and learning how to use the library."

"I think the library tour stands out most. That was very beneficial to me because it showed me how to find things that I didn't know were there."

"I thought it was a positive experience and I felt good

about sharing the information I learned after I left the course, like this is where you go to find this information, how to figure out when to take exams etc. Like my roommate would ask me questions and I could say, 'Sure, I've got a handout right here.' This one course provided all the information I needed for that first semester."

"Well, the thing that helped me out the most would be the trip to the library. I think we took two trips to the library and we were shown how to use the computers and just a general tour of what the library was about and I had a paper due later that semester. I had a few papers to do that semester and when I needed research, that really helped out because I didn't know where I was going in that place up until that time."

"It helped us when they took us through the library and taught us how to look for books and stuff like that."

"They showed us around the school and that's what I really liked. Because like the places like the counseling center and even how you can find certain things in the library. I don't think I would have ever found out if it hadn't been for that class. And to tell you the truth that was the only time I've ever been in the counseling center was that year but it was nice that they showed us around. They explained to us where the affirmative action office was, you know, what things Old Main did, what kind of offices they had in there."

"He showed us around the library. It was really easy in my sophomore year to find different research and all that rather than just going to the card catalog. He showed us also how to use the computer that they had and the front reference desk. Even like, you know, that little room that they have in the library. You know like they have all the new books, like the Jackie Collins books. I would have never known about that. I think it's the R and R room. I don't think I would have ever known what that was if it hadn't been for that year."

"The most significant part was going to different parts of the university and learning about different services. Because of that I felt more comfortable going to places when I needed help and I found out about some scholarships, the counseling center, the writing center, and the career placement center that I wouldn't have known about. The library assignment helped me use different areas of the library."

"We had to use the library. He gave us an assignment. He had us find a book on a certain topic and it made us go to the library. I had never used the library so I think that was what I remember most because it was the most helpful."

"Other kids are always asking me, "How do you use the library?" and I learned how in Freshman Seminar."

"I'm in Psi Chi and Departmental Honors. Freshman Seminar helped because I wouldn't have known about some of the organizations."

"We were asked to go and visit the counseling center and I had to actually go in and talk to someone. I was one of the first to go in and I liked it and it really helped me. I had time to talk to the girl there. I haven't been back since, but I know it's there if I need the service."

"As much as I hated making those visits all over campus, I think that was something that was real beneficial to me later on because I knew physically where the buildings were and what they were for."

Category 3: Improving Academic Skills

Three topics or items contributed to this category but each topic had only two or three segment affiliated with it. These topics were:

5. Improving group communication skills, especially verbal assertiveness: questionnaire response of 34/59 favorable and 25/59 questionable to negative (item 7).
6. Improving note taking skills for other classes: questionnaire response of 33/59 favorable and 26/59 questionable to negative (item 18).
7. Improving time management skills: questionnaire response of 46/59 favorable and 13/59 questionable to negative (item 20).

Topic 5. improving group communication skills, especially verbal assertiveness.

"Well, we worked in a lot of groups. We had interaction, and shared a lot of ideas and did a lot of stuff in groups. That helped me some because I was kind of nervous at first since I had just come to college."

"It was very open for students to participate. It wasn't like other classes. It was small which was something I liked."

"I think the one that stands out most in my mind was getting together in groups of four and getting up in front of the class. We did a skit as a family. Our son or daughter came home with a girlfriend or boyfriend and we had to act it out and portray how we would react as a family. It was great."

"I learned to work in groups and I met people. We had a group research project to learn about things on campus and so it kinda broke me in for more interaction and working with groups. Every semester I've had to work in groups in one class or another and that has been very helpful."

"The group discussions were always nice, too, and I remember being able to talk about things and ask questions without feeling inferior or stupid, because nobody else really knew either, so I felt open to talk."

Topic 6. improving note taking skills for other classes.

"The most significant topic for me was learning how to take notes. Still to this day I use that note taking method and it works well for me."

"They did talk about study skills and I needed that."

Topic 7. improving time management skills.

"The session on time management was good for me. It gave me a good start on learning how to manage my time."

"They taught us about time management. We did a time chart and kept records. It's helped me be more aware of how I used my time."

Theme 3: Personal Development

The third developmental theme that emerged from this process was Personal Development. There were sixteen segments of information

extracted from the interviews which related to this theme. Building relationships, improving self-esteem, and developing positive attitudes toward others construct the basis for this theme. Interviewees provided a strong link to the theme in the language used to describe their growth. Words such as increased self confidence, more initiative, a jump start, and achievement are some of the descriptives students used in expressing their perceptions of the impact of Freshman Seminar on their college experience.

Included in the Personal Development theme is the awareness and acceptance of persons whose culture or values may be different than those experienced prior to entering college. This is in line with Chickering's (1969) fifth vector, Freeing interpersonal relationships. In this stage of development, the student experiences an increased tolerance for other people and is more apt to seek relationships built on trust, independence and individuality. This in turn allows them to redefine who they are, thus establishing autonomy as described by Erikson's (1963) theory of psychosocial development.

Freshman Seminar courses are designed to promote personal development in students. Character development (Upcraft, 1989), infusion of cultural diversity (Hilsen, 1990), cross-cultural awareness events (Harris, 1990), relationships with parents and dating relationships (Meyer, 1991), are issues covered in the course to encourage personal development. Through classroom instruction and the text (Gardner, 1989), the course at Eastern Illinois University offers an opportunity for students to examine their personal system of values, to develop critical

thinking and life skills, and to enhance cultural growth and understanding of other people. Development in these areas can contribute to a clearer sense of self-awareness. Competence, identity, and integrity (Chickering, 1969) are the desired outcomes of this developmental process.

Category 4: Personal Growth Experiences

Two items, enhancing my self-esteem and enhancing my growth as a student, contributed to this category. Ten segments or comments were associated with it.

8. Enhancing my self-esteem: questionnaire response of 41/59 favorable and 18/59 questionable to negative (item 14).
9. Enhancing my growth as a student: questionnaire response of 52/59 favorable and 7/59 questionable to negative (item 17).

The comments from the interviews reflect student perceptions of growth related to self-esteem and personal development.

Topic 8. enhancing my self-esteem.

"They told us by taking this class we would get a jump start on everybody else. It helped us to have a better understanding of college life. I still see people from that class and think, well, that probably had some truth to it."

"It helps you to fit in."

"I believe that the seminar helped me do well in my work at school coming into a college where I didn't know much about it. I knew a couple of friends who helped me but I think Freshman Seminar helped me to realize what I needed to accomplish through college. I believe that it has helped me to take off and take charge of my classes and since then I'm graduating in four years, which is not possible for some people."

"I think, you know, during my freshman year because of that class I felt a lot more confident of myself because I was the only person of my whole group of friends that took that class, and before, they used to tease me because they thought

that was just kind of like a... I don't know, like I was lost going into college, you know. I just felt like I knew a lot. I ended up knowing where a lot more things were and how to get things than they did. They were freshmen that didn't understand where to get financial aid forms or anything like that, and I was the one who was able to tell them so I think it made me a little more confident."

"Because of the class I learned to take more initiative."

"I think it kinda was a starter class for me. All the other classes you went, heard a lecture, had a test and that was it. In this class since I was a freshman and away from home it was kinda scary, and this class was something different. I felt more at home, not like in the other classes where you just felt like a number."

"I think it helped me with my self-esteem and my independence. I was from a very small community and this was the first big step for me and I was really close with my family and I really think it helped me to get out on my own a little bit more than I would have."

Topic 9. enhancing my growth as a student.

"The activity that stands out the most to me was the one where we talked about changes. It think it was called "Do you think you've changed?" and it made us think about transition and change in our lives since we left home."

"Knowing how to use the resources and where to find them was probably the best growth experience I had. The class provided direction so that you didn't get lost in the shuffle."

"I think it helps the students adjust to college life."

"I guess my people skills improved. Once you meet people in the same boat as you, you get more confident you know that's a good basis to start everything. That was really important to me though because I remember the friends that I made from that."

"The overall objective of the class is to help students adjust and that's basically what they go about doing and here there's a bunch of other freshman."

"I think it's great and I recommend it to all incoming freshmen."

"It helps to become more acquainted with the whole university and helps students to adjust to a different kind of lifestyle that you're not used to."

"It really helped because the whole interaction with all the other students who were here for the first time, and it made us all feel more comfortable. I am a resident assistant now and I know about all those things and people are always coming to me who are sophomores and juniors who have no clue how to use the library and I now feel that because of that class it got me more interested in campus than I probably would have been and got me going and now I'm able to act as a resource person for people on my floor."

"It lets students know what's on campus and to help them adjust and I think it does all that but I think most of the people who took it wanted to succeed in college anyway and I don't know if they would have regardless. The people who were in there wanted to do well in college and that's why they took it; otherwise they wouldn't have enrolled in it."

"I feel the EIU 1001 class was very beneficial. I've received several scholarships due to information I gained in the class. I am on the Dean's list. I believe the class helped me start my college career off on a good foot."

Category 5: Developing positive attitudes toward others.

Three items were reflective of attitudes toward other people. They were:

10. Developing better relationships with my roommates:
questionnaire response of 31/59 favorable and 29/59
questionable to negative (item 11).
11. Developing more positive attitudes toward university
faculty: questionnaire response of 48/59 favorable and 11/59
questionable to negative (item 24).
12. Being more accepting of individuals with values that differ
from my own: questionnaire response of 50/59 favorable and
9/59 questionable to negative.

Interviewees were very free with comments regarding the impact of Freshman Seminar on their attitudes toward other people.

Topic 10. developing better relationships with my roommates.

"I liked the topic on getting along with your roommate and things to expect when living in the dorm. That was really nice also."

"A lot of people in my class had trouble getting along with their roommate and it was just easier for them to talk about it."

"My roommate took the class with me and it made us get to know each other real quick and we're still friends after four years."

"I think the topic that meant the most to me was the one dealing with living in the dorm and how that related to leaving home, and getting involved there. It made me more aware of what was going on around me and I learned where things were on campus."

Topic 11. developing more positive attitudes toward university faculty.

"The teacher was excellent."

"They (the instructor) can tell the students things that the advisor wouldn't tell them because the advisor sees so many students that you know they're just a piece of paper to them. They're not a person, but in Freshman Seminar they are people and the teacher and student can look at each other and tell them where to go and how to go about doing it."

"I was very nervous the first time about going away to school and it was a lot easier to have a teacher who would explain to us where things were."

"We had to ask one of our teachers out for lunch."

"We had to take our teacher out to lunch and that was fun."

"One other thing that I really liked about it was that they encouraged us to always talk to our professors, and at the time it seemed like the scariest thing in the world, but now I am so glad. He said 'We're not going to bite you or scare you away,' and that has really helped me to keep the line of communication open."

"Our instructor was real energetic and fun and I think that's important in a teacher; that it be someone who is not going to intimidate the students right away."

Topic 12. being more accepting of individuals with values that differ from my own.

"I think The most significant topic was all the student interaction in that you're in the same situation; coming together in an environment in school with other kids your age from other backgrounds. It kinda gives you a different understanding. I met other students my own age who come from, like the same background, but I'm from a small town but I kinda got a feel for what their home life was like, and where they came from. So I think that was probably the significant; the student interaction."

"Cultural diversity didn't seem to be a big deal and I know that on this campus the minority population is very slim but that's not the case in a lot of places you're going to go after college. And I mean it's not hurting you to have a little session on that and I don't remember one on that. That might be something to think about."

"There were only two of us who were black in the class and one Mexican girl, and it would have been nice to know where to go for help with discrimination. But I haven't had that many incidences where it happened to me but I have had a few."

"I guess when you go in there you come from your particular town and it was just neat to be in with so many people from all over, and from Illinois and stuff and we would talk about all the home towns and how big the town was and what everybody's life was like before they came to school and that was interesting to like broaden your mind; to know about people's lives. It kinda helped me get along with people. It made me more open minded."

The verbal data from the eleven interviews and the responses to the questionnaires support the three themes. The segments of information taken from the interviews were sorted into topics identified by the items on the questionnaire. These topics were then categorized into five categories as shown in Table I. The categories were analyzed to build the three developmental themes (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993 p. 497).

Findings and Analysis of Survey Questionnaire.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 2, "Summary of All Respondents to Questionnaire", identifies the findings as reported by the data obtained from the questionnaire. The first column lists the twenty-five variables which also have been identified as general objectives of the Freshman Seminar course. The second column gives the mean of the response if strongly agree was equal to five, agree equal to four, no opinion equal to three, disagree equal to two, and strongly disagree equal to one. The remaining columns identify the percentage of responses reported for each corresponding response category, with the numeric indicators listed in parenthesis. For example: for variable four, (20/59) indicates that twenty of the 59 subjects responded with strongly agree to making friends within the university, (33/59) responded with agree, (2/59) responded with no opinion, (3/59) responded with disagree, and (1/59) responded with strongly disagree.

Twelve of the items on the survey questionnaire have been addressed in the three developmental themes. The responses to these and the remaining items are shown in Table two. The following discussion incorporated the responses to the questionnaire items as they related to the objectives of this study.

The three research objectives of the study are listed below, followed by the findings associated with each objective.

Research objective one:

1. To determine the relative perceptions of students regarding Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University, three years after they have taken the course.

When survey subjects were asked to look back on their Freshman Seminar experience and indicate if they perceived it to have been useful, fifty-three of the fifty-nine (89.8%) responded positively (Table 2). This finding was in support of Freshman Seminar as a helpful course and reflected a positive perception. Every one of the eleven interviewees said they have recommended the course to other students.

Research objective two:

2. To determine the extent to which general objectives have been met as perceived by students who completed Freshman Seminar during its initial offering, fall 1989.

By responding favorably to the questionnaire items, which were also course objectives, respondents indicated that they perceived that a majority of the course objectives had been met. Results showed eighteen of the the twenty five objectives to have been attained with a mean item response of 3.5 or more (Table 2).

The following verbal excerpts were taken from responses given when interviewees were asked "In what ways do you believe that Freshman Seminar is meeting the desired goal?":

"I think it is meeting the goal. It helped me and I think it helps the students adjust to college life so I'd say it's meeting the goal.

"It is meeting the goal to help you get familiar with the things at EIU. It also helps you meet new people. You have the people in the class and you get to know them and feel more comfortable than in some of the classes, and that helps

when you're a freshman."

"It lets students know what's on campus and to help them adjust and I think it does all that but I think most of the people who took it wanted to succeed in college anyway and I don't know if they would have regardless. The people who were in there wanted to do well in college and that's why they took it; otherwise they wouldn't have enrolled in it."

"I think it really does help out. Yeah, I think it does meet the goals. It did for me anyway."

"It really helped because of the whole interaction with all the other students who were here for the first time."

"I think it helps the freshmen become more comfortable in the college setting and just getting to know the different parts of the campus really helps a lot."

"Yes I do. It helps to become more acquainted with the whole university and helps students to adjust to a different kind of lifestyle that you're not used to."

"Like I said before it helps set the student on his or her course and gives them quite an advantage."

"The overall objective of the class is to help students adjust and that's basically what they go about doing."

"I thought it was a positive experience."

"It shows a lot of aspects of EIU that students may not pick up until their Junior year if they don't have the class. I really think it helps new students to relate to other students too, because everyone is coming into the class as new on campus and we all had lots of questions."

None of the eleven students who were interviewed responded negatively when asked the question. Instead each one gave at least one way that they perceived Freshman Seminar to have met the desired objectives.

Research objective three:

3. To identify differences in perception of students based on gender, race, first generation college student status, and ACT

scores.

Chi Square was used treating the data categorically as favorable (strongly agree or agree) and questionable to negative (no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree), thus collapsing the variables for first generation college students, and ACT scores. The ACT scores were grouped low ($ACT = < 18$), moderate ($ACT = 18 - 21$), and high ($ACT = > 21$).

Initial review of the tabulated data revealed little or no significant difference in the responses with respect to sex and race of the students. This was primarily due to the low number (five) of non-caucasian subjects in the sample. The statistical procedures may not have been robust given the sample size.

The t-tests for independent samples by gender alone were also non significant. The high number of students responding favorable, strongly agree or agree, to several variables combined with the possibility of five different responses for each variable resulted in no significant difference between perceptions of male and female students. Based on this initial review, further analyses were not performed for these variables.

In the finding for the independent variable regarding first generation student status, forty-two of fifty-nine students reported, yes, their parents had attended college; and seventeen indicated, no, their parents had not attended college. This was an indication that 28.8% of the subjects in this study were first generation college students. This variable was also analyzed using the chi-square statistic. The two by two categories for this measurement were favorable perception of Freshman Seminar, or questionable to negative perceptions by status or non-status,

as first generation college students ($N = 59$, $df = 1$, $\alpha = .05$). Favorable included all strongly agree and agree responses. Questionable to negative responses grouped together no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree responses.

These findings are reported in Table 3, "Summary of Responses Regarding Parental College Attendance". No significant difference was found at the level set for this study ($\alpha = .05$).

Insert Table 3 about here

Finally, chi square was used to treat data categorically as favorable to Freshman Seminar (strongly agree or agree) or questionable to negative (no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree) by low ($ACT = < 18$), moderate ($ACT = 18 - 21$), or high ($ACT = > 21$) American College Test Composite scores ($N = 59$; $df = 2$, $\alpha = .05$).

On only two items were there significant differences between responses of students with low ACT scores ($ACT = < 18$) and moderate ($ACT = 18 - 21$) or high ACT scores ($ACT = > 21$). The items were: making a decision to remain in college (item 1), and enhancing my growth as a student (item 17). Fifteen (62.5%) of the twenty four students with low ACT scores responded favorably to item 1: Freshman Seminar has assisted me in making a decision to remain in college. Only three (23.1%) students with high ACT scores and seven (31.8%) with moderate ACT scores responded positively.

All of the twenty four students indicated that Freshman Seminar

assisted them in enhancing their growth as a student whereas only 86.4% of moderate and 69.2% of high ACT students responded similarly. These findings are reported in Table 4, "Summary of Responses Grouped According to Levels of ACT Scores".

Insert Table 4 about here

Summary of findings

A total of sixty five students who participated in the first Freshman Seminar offered at Eastern Illinois University were still enrolled at Eastern Illinois University seven semesters after their fall, 1989, matriculation. Of the sixty five, fifty nine (90.8%) completed a twenty-five item likert-style questionnaire asking for their perceptions of social, academic, and personal areas of student development, as reflected in outcome objectives set for the course. Eleven volunteer students were also interviewed in depth about their personal recollections of the impact of the freshman seminar course.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

Using a triangulation approach to analyze the survey and interview data, three themes emerged from the data. They were: (1). Involvement and making friends, (2). Academic growth, and (3). Personal Development.

Three research objectives were addressed by the survey data:

1. To determine the relative perceptions of students regarding Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University, three years after they completed the course.
2. To determine the extent to which general objectives were met as perceived by students who completed the course during its initial offering in fall, 1989.
3. To identify differences in perception of students based on gender, race, first generation college student status and ACT scores.

For research objective one, fifty-three of fifty-nine (89.8%) of students responded that the impact of Freshman Seminar was positive. The constructed themes revealed patterns indicating positive development in involvement/social, academic, and personal growth of the sample of students who took Freshman Seminar fall 1989.

Research objective two assessed students perception of whether general course objectives were attained. Students perceived a majority of Freshman Seminar objectives (18 of 25) to have been attained with a mean

item response of 3.5 or more (Table 2). All interviewees responded positively when asked to identify ways Freshman Seminar was meeting the desired objectives.

Research objective three identified differences in perception of students based on gender, race, first generation college student status and ACT scores. Tabulation of the data on gender and racial differences revealed no meaningful findings nor statistical differences in the chi square analyses. However the Chi Square analyses on the perceptions of students according to ACT scores showed that those with lower ACT scores responded with significance on two items. Those two items were: decision to remain in college (item 1) and enhancing my growth as a student (item 17). The levels of significance were .03069 (item 1) and .02086 (item 17). This indicated that students from this sample who had lower ACT scores perceived the course to have been beneficial in their making a decision to remain in college and also enhanced their growth as students.

Although the format and content areas may differ from one institution to another, Barefoot (1992), indicated that Freshman Seminars are generally implemented to improve the likelihood of academic and social integration and the overall satisfaction as students begin their college experience. Barefoot described the Freshman Seminar as a "life jacket" in a sea where students are offered a number of ways to succeed rather than being told to "sink or swim". The EIU 1001 course can also be described as a "life jacket" since this study has indicated that it is a useful tool in academic and social interaction. The interviews revealed segments of

information regarding the social impact the course had on students as well as the perceived importance of the friendships that were developed during the class with other students and also instructors. It could be implied from the interview data that the mentoring/role modeling of the instructor is as important as the content of the course.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study include the following: Most students surveyed who took Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University in Fall Semester 1989 perceived the course to have had a positive impact on their college experience.

The three developmental themes constructed from the student survey responses and the interview data are consistent with postulates identified in student development theory as it pertains to freshmen students. The design of the study substantiated the themes since the patterns constructed from topics lead to categories which contributed to the three themes.

Theme one, Involvement and making friends was supported by three of the theories explored. Chickering's (1969) vectors of competency development (vector 1) and freeing interpersonal relationships (vector 5); Erikson's (1963) fifth stage of psychosocial development of establishment of personal identity; and Astin's (Upcraft, 1989) involvement theory which held that students learn by becoming involved; each supported the findings which indicated that participation in Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University was instrumental in students becoming involved in organization. Participation also contributed to their social development by providing a support group of friends who experienced similar challenges

of transition from high school to college.

Theme two, Academic growth, was a desired outcome for students who took Freshman Seminar. This was supported by Perry's (Upcraft, 1989) theory of intellectual and ethical development and by Chickering's (1969) competency development vector. Categories which contributed to this theme were; finding resources on campus, and improving academic skills, such as group communication skills, note taking skills, and time management skills.

Theme three, Personal Development was substantiated by three theorists. Establishing identity, developing integrity (Chickering, 1969), commitment in relativism (Perry as identified in Upcraft, 1989), and identity development (Erikson, 1963), are characteristic of freshmen students. Students in this study identified topics associated with two categories: personal growth experiences, and positive attitudes toward others. The Personal Development theme emerged from the categories. Students who participated in the Freshman Seminar course at Eastern Illinois University, fall 1989, reported positive perceptions of the impact of the course on their personal development through enhanced growth as a student, enhanced self-esteem, understanding cultural differences, and more positive attitudes toward others.

All eleven students interviewed indicated that the course was meeting objectives in various ways. Without exception, these interviews were positive toward the Freshman Seminar concept. Some students had suggestions for improving the course by suggesting that it count for more than one credit, or to include various additional topics.

"I feel it should be a two credit class, however I learned so much about EIU. I would definitely recommend this to any incoming freshman. It was a lot of fun."

"I suggest the instructor put people on Illinet and make them look up books."

"I feel this class gave me too much to do as a freshman with not enough (credit) hours given to this class."

"It was pretty good but I would have liked to have had more information on other resources, you know, like student services building, the counseling center, and maybe the placement center. Also, it would have been nice to know about the computer labs, like where they are and how you go about using them."

"I remember it being a little hap hazard but it was the first time. It could be a little more structured maybe. The eight weeks is plenty long enough. More time on study skills and time management might be a good idea for freshmen considering those are some of their biggest problems."

"They did do a good job with the library tour but a campus wide tour of other buildings like Old Main or the Science Building to learn where the academic departments were located, would have been helpful. And maybe more information about how to check out the other resident halls to know about the options available for the other halls."

"I think its great and I recommend it to all incoming freshmen."

"You could have anybody talk to the class, like housing people, the black student union, the gay lesbian group or the karate club just to let people know about it. I didn't know about the karate club for a long time. You don't know about some of this stuff until you've been here a long time. If you find out about it early you can't really go wrong."

"It might be made into a full term course and count it two credit hours. It is a lot of work for just one credit hour."

Alternative explanations for the findings.

One explanation for the findings might be that the students who took Freshman Seminar were self-selected, meaning that they chose the class as

part of a conscious effort to succeed in college. Since they chose the course they not only may have been more determined to succeed, but more positive about the impact of Freshman Seminar on their college experience than would a similar group of students who were required to take the course.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Limitations of the Study.

Strengths of the study include the triangulation approach which allowed for validation of data through multiple research methods: questionnaire, interviews, and developmental theme building (Stage and Russell, 1992). The questionnaire provided a wide range of perceptions through twenty five items/course objectives. Existing student records provided data that also supported positive evaluation for the Freshman Seminar experience (C. Nichols, personal communication, January 8, 1993). The student survey responses provided data to determine if course objectives were perceived to have been met. The interviews served to enhance the data with rich verbal collections from eleven students. The data from the interviews were organized into topics, categories, and patterns to form themes. Each aspect of the triangulation technique thus validated or cross-checked the other two by comparing data (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993).

The limitations of the study were the lack of a matched control group of students who did not take the Freshman Seminar course but matriculated at the same date at Eastern Illinois University, and the attrition of the original ninety three students in the experimental group in Freshman Seminar, compared to sixty five who were eligible for the

final survey group, and fifty nine who actually completed the seminar assessment survey.

Implications

Implications for student services personnel and higher education administrators were found in the student development themes developed in this study since these themes parallel those found in discussions of student development theory (Creamer, 1990). The indication that Freshman Seminar was perceived to have assisted all ($n = 24$) the students with low ACT ($ACT < 18$) scores in enhancing their growth as a student, was consistent with implications that freshmen often assume their problem is a lack of intelligence or a combination of social factors that prevent academic success (Upcraft, 1989). The students with low ACT scores, who participated in Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University, perceived the course to enhance their growth as a student. These results suggested that success of freshman students can be enhanced through the use of a Freshman Seminar course. Administrators at Eastern Illinois University were presented the results to utilize in evaluation of Freshman Seminar, EIU 1001.

Although there was no significance difference at the significance level of .05 in the chi square analysis (Hays, 1963) of responses of students whose parents attended college versus those whose parents did not attend college, differences would be found at the .10 level. If the .10 level were used, five items in this independent variable would show more than a ten percent difference between those students whose parents attended college and those whose parents did not attend college. A larger

sample size, reflected in subsequent years' Freshman Seminar enrollments, might bring these items to statistical significance. The five items suggesting a meaningful increase in the favorable responses by students whose parents did not attend college were (Table 3):

Item 2: becoming more involved in various organizations: 70.6% of the students whose parents did not attend college responded favorably while only 59.5% of the students whose parents did attend college responded favorably.

Item 7: improving group communication skills, especially verbal assertiveness: 70.6% of the students whose parents did not attend college responded favorably while 52.4% of the students whose parents did attend college responded favorably.

Item 20: improving time management skills: 88.2% of the students whose parents did not attend college responded favorably while 73.8% of the students whose parents did attend college responded favorably.

The two items having a higher percentage for students responding favorably whose parents did attend college were:

Item 15: clarifying my values: 61.9% of the students whose parents did attend college responded favorably while 47.1% of the students whose parents did not attend college responded favorably.

Item 18: improving note taking skills for other classes: 59.5% of the students whose parents did attend college responded favorably while 47.1% of the students whose parents did not attend college responded favorably.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research is needed in the area of student perception regarding Freshman Seminar. There were several studies relating to increased retention rates (Shanley and Witten, 1990; Davis 1992; Harris, 1990; Lenning and Mohnkern, 1986) with the implementation of a Freshman Seminar course but little was found regarding student perceptions. This study was conducted at one institution with a very small group of subjects, which limits the external validity or generalizability of the results. Additional research questions dealing with the impact on students of gender and age differences of instructors, cultural differences of students and perceived success rates, similar courses for the growing non-traditional student population, and differences of perceptions of students who were required to take the course versus those who volunteered, need exploration.

Recommendations for Changes in Procedures.

Since this group of students was self-selected in both the decision to take the class and then in interviewing for the research project, there is a possible bias toward the positive since a student with negative perceptions may have been unwilling to accept an interview. Changes in procedures could accommodate the less positive by providing specific instructions with the questionnaire soliciting negative as well as positive comments. This questionnaire allowed for comments but did not specifically request whether they be negative or positive.

A follow-up study to determine the perception of the twenty eight students who took the Freshman Seminar course but were no longer enrolled

at Eastern Illinois University would help to determine if the course met the course objectives for those students. Those students may have transferred to another institution and although retention was lost at one university, the student could have successfully completed a program at another university. ETU 1001 may have been perceived as having assisted the student in the collegiate experience whether at Eastern Illinois University or at another school.

Summary.

This study served as a basis for future study of the Freshman Seminar course as it exists at Eastern Illinois University. It can be used as a tool to assist in justification of the course since the students perceived it to have made a positive impact on their college experience. It was concluded that Freshman Seminar is an effective method of promoting social, academic, and personal growth for new college students. The three developmental themes that were constructed from the data are consistent with student development theory as it deals with freshmen students.

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CHARLTON # 6190

Table 1 - DEVELOPMENTAL THEMES

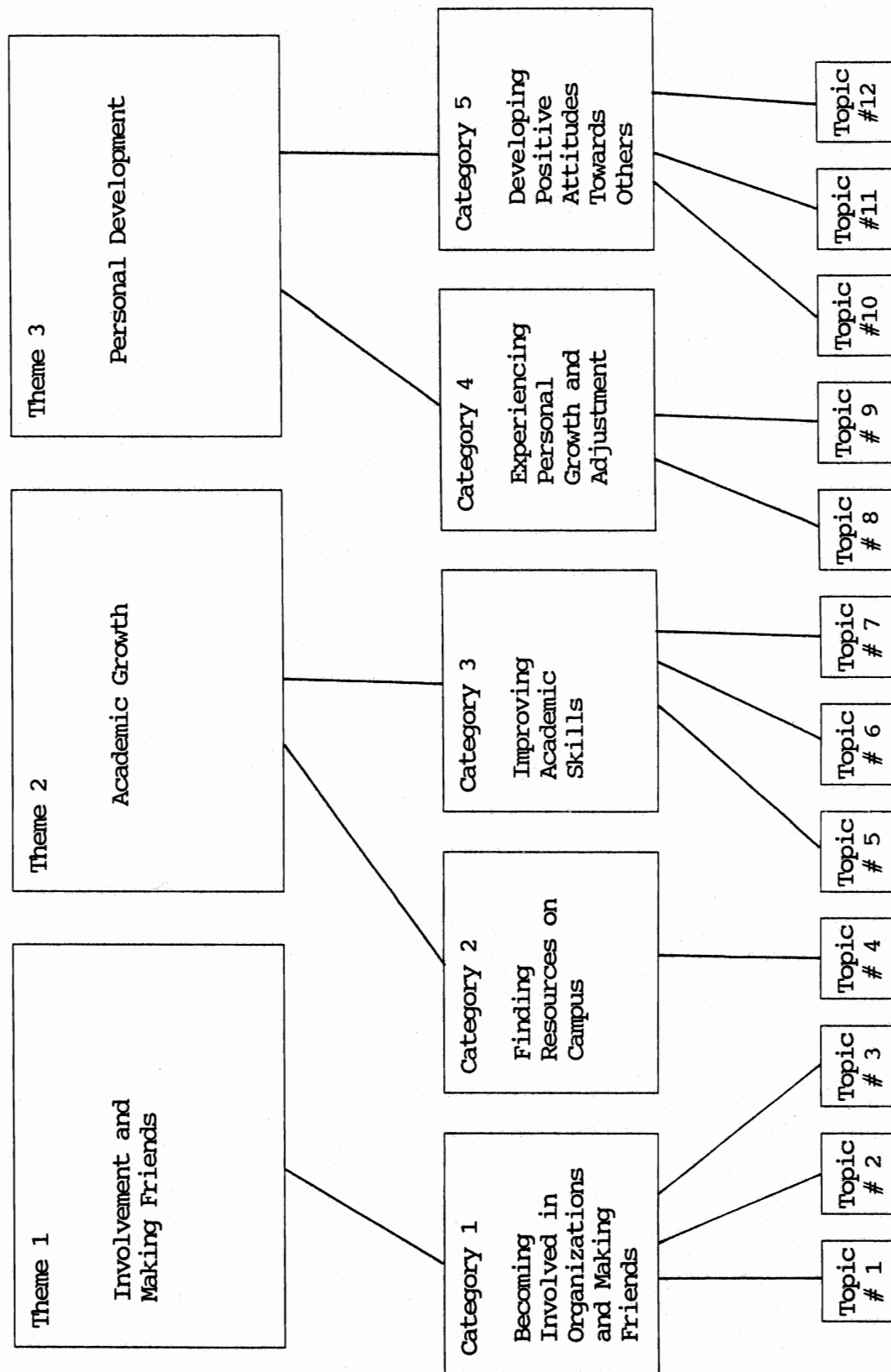


Table 2

SUMMARY OF ALL RESPONDENTS TO QUESTIONNAIRE

The Freshman Seminar experience has assisted me in:	Mean (S.D.)	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No Opinion (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1. making a decision to remain in college	3.2	10.2% (6/59)	32.2% (19/59)	35.6% (21/59)	11.9% (7/59)	10.2% (6/59)
2. becoming more involved in various organizations	3.5	16.9% (10/59)	45.8% (27/59)	13.6% (8/59)	16.9% (10/59)	6.8% (4/59)
3. finding a support group of peers	3.5	11.9% (7/59)	50.8% (30/59)	16.9% (10/59)	16.9% (10/59)	3.4% (2/59)
4. making friends within the university	4.2	33.9% (20/59)	55.9% (33/59)	3.4% (2/59)	5.1% (3/59)	1.7% (1/59)
5. developing a more positive attitude toward ETU	4.2	30.5% (18/59)	61.0% (36/59)	6.8% (4/59)	1.7% (1/59)	0.0% (0/59)
6. finding resources on campus to help solve problems	4.5	55.9% (33/59)	42.4% (25/59)	0.0% (0/59)	1.7% (1/59)	0.0% (0/59)
7. improving group communication skills	3.7	16.9% (10/59)	40.7% (24/59)	35.6% (21/59)	6.8% (4/59)	0.0% (0/59)
8. learning strategies to managing my finances	3.3	8.5% (5/59)	32.2% (19/59)	40.7% (24/59)	16.9% (10/59)	1.7% (1/59)
9. making informed choices about alcohol and drugs	3.4	1.7% (1/59)	49.2% (29/59)	35.6% (21/59)	10.2% (6/59)	3.4% (2/59)
10. dealing with stress and other mental factors	3.8	13.6% (8/59)	61.0% (36/59)	18.6% (11/59)	3.4% (2/59)	3.4% (2/59)
11. developing better relationships with my roommates	3.4	10.2% (6/59)	42.4% (25/59)	30.5% (18/59)	15.3% (9/59)	1.7% (1/59)
12. understanding and accepting cultural differences	3.9	16.9% (10/59)	55.9% (33/59)	23.7% (14/59)	1.7% (1/59)	1.7% (1/59)

Table 2 (continued)

	Mean (S.D.)	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No Opinion (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
13. gaining a better understanding of dating relationships	3.2	6.8% (4/59)	27.1% (16/59)	47.5% (28/59)	15.3% (9/59)	3.4% (2/59)
14. enhancing my self-esteem	3.7	6.8% (4/59)	62.7% (37/59)	27.1% (16/59)	0.0% (0/59)	3.4% (2/59)
15. clarifying my values	3.5	8.5% (5/59)	49.2% (29/59)	32.2% (19/59)	6.8% (4/59)	3.4% (2/59)
16. exploring long range goals	3.8	18.6% (11/59)	54.2% (32/59)	18.6% (11/59)	6.8% (4/59)	1.7% (1/59)
17. enhancing my growth as a student	4.0	16.9% (10/59)	71.2% (42/59)	6.8% (4/59)	3.4% (2/59)	1.7% (1/59)
18. improving note taking skills for other classes	3.4	10.2% (6/59)	45.8% (27/59)	22.0% (13/59)	20.3% (12/59)	1.7% (1/59)
19. improving test taking skills	3.4	8.5% (5/59)	45.8% (27/59)	28.8% (17/59)	15.3% (9/59)	1.7% (1/59)
20. improving time management skills	3.8	15.3% (9/59)	62.7% (37/59)	13.6% (8/59)	6.8% (4/59)	1.7% (1/59)
21. identifying what professors expect	4.0	18.6% (11/59)	66.1% (39/59)	13.6% (8/59)	1.7% (1/59)	0.0% (0/59)
22. developing positive attitudes toward learning	3.9	18.6% (11/59)	61.0% (36/59)	15.3% (9/59)	3.4% (2/59)	1.7% (1/59)
23. understanding university policies and procedures	4.2	30.5% (18/59)	57.6% (34/59)	8.5% (5/59)	3.4% (2/59)	0.0% (0/59)
24. developing more positive attitudes toward faculty	4.0	23.7% (14/59)	57.6% (34/59)	16.9% (10/59)	0.0% (0/59)	1.7% (1/59)
25. being more accepting of individuals with differing values	4.1	30.5% (18/59)	54.2% (32/59)	13.6% (8/59)	1.7% (1/59)	0.0% (0/59)

Table 3

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES PERTAINING TO PARENTAL COLLEGE ATTENDANCE
AND FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT

Percentage of respondents responding favorably to the statement:
"Have either of your parents ever attended college?" (item 27).

The Freshman Seminar experience has assisted me in:	Yes	No	Critical Value	DF	Significance
1. making a decision to remain in college	40.5% (17/42)	47.1% (8/17)	.21475	1	.64307
2. becoming more involved in various organizations	59.5% (25/42)	70.6% (12/17)	.63355	1	.42606
3. finding a support group of peers	64.3% (27/42)	58.8% (10/17)	.15440	1	.69436
4. making friends within the university	88.2% (37/42)	94.1% (16/17)	.48047	1	.48821
5. developing a more positive attitude toward EIU	90.5% (38/42)	94.1% (16/17)	.20689	1	.64922
6. finding resources on campus to help solve problems	97.6% (41/42)	100.0% (17/17)	.41174	1	.52109
7. improving group communication skills	52.4% (22/42)	70.6% (12/17)	1.64294	1	.19992
8. learning strategies to managing my finances	40.5% (17/42)	41.2% (7/17)	.00246	1	.96045
9. making informed choices about alcohol and drugs	52.4% (22/42)	47.1% (8/17)	.13715	1	.71113
10. dealing with stress and other mental factors	73.8% (31/42)	76.5% (13/17)	.04520	1	.83164
11. developing better relationships with my roommates	52.4% (22/42)	52.9% (9/17)	.00152	1	.96887
12. understanding and accepting cultural differences	73.8% (31/42)	70.6% (12/17)	.06354	1	.80099

Table 3 (continued)

	Yes	No	Critical Value	DF	Significance
13. gaining a better understanding of dating relationships	35.7% (15/42)	29.4% (5/17)	.21453	1	.64324
14. enhancing my self-esteem	71.4% (30/42)	64.7% (11/17)	.25798	1	.61151
15. clarifying my values	61.9% (26/42)	47.1% (8/17)	1.09231	1	.29596
16. exploring long range goals	76.2% (32/42)	64.7% (11/17)	.80759	1	.36883
17. enhancing my growth as a student	88.1% (37/42)	88.2% (15/17)	.00023	1	.98798
18. improving note taking skills for other classes	59.5% (25/42)	47.1% (8/17)	.76286	1	.38243
19. improving test taking skills	54.8% (23/42)	52.9% (9/17)	.01616	1	..89883
20. improving time management skills	73.8% (31/42)	88.2% (15/17)	1.46598	1	.22598
21. identifying what professors expect	83.3% (35/42)	88.2% (15/17)	.22495	1	.63530
22. developing positive attitudes toward learning	78.6% (33/42)	82.4% (14/17)	.10681	1	.74381
23. understanding university policies and procedures	85.7% (36/42)	94.1% (16/17)	.81725	1	.36599
24. developing more positive attitudes toward faculty	78.6% (33/42)	88.2% (15/17)	.74510	1	.38803
25. being more accepting of individuals with differing values	85.7% (36/42)	82.4% (14/17)	.10577	1	.74501

Table 4

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES GROUPED ACCORDING TO LEVELS OF ACT SCORES

Percent of respondents responding favorably to the statement, grouped according to Low (< 18) Moderate (18-21), and High (>21) Composite ACT Scores.

The Freshman Seminar
experience has assisted
me in:

	Low	Moderate	High	Critical Value	DF	Significance
1. making a decision to remain in college	62.5% (15/24)	31.8% (7/22)	23.1% (3/13)	6.96757	2	.03069
2. becoming more involved in various organizations	66.7% (16/24)	54.5% (12/22)	69.2% (9/13)	1.02420	2	.59923
3. finding a support group of peers	70.8% (17/24)	59.1% (13/22)	53.8% (7/13)	1.23728	2	.53868
4. making friends within the university	95.8% (23/24)	81.8% (18/22)	92.3% (12/13)	2.58002	2	.27527
5. developing a more positive attitude toward EIU	100.0% (24/24)	86.4% (19/22)	84.6% (11/13)	3.77823	2	.15121
6. finding resources on campus to help solve problems	100.0% (24/24)	95.5% (21/22)	100.0% (13/13)	1.71081	2	.42511
7. improving group communication skills	58.3% (14/24)	59.1% (1/22)	53.8% (7/13)	.10032	2	.95108
8. learning strategies to managing my finances	41.7% (10/24)	27.3% (6/22)	61.5% (8/13)	3.99236	2	.13585
9. making informed choices about alcohol and drugs	58.3% (14/24)	54.5% (12/22)	30.8% (4/13)	2.75540	2	.25216
10. dealing with stress and other mental factors	79.2% (19/24)	72.7% (16/22)	69.2% (9/13)	.50232	2	.77790
11. developing better relationships with my roommates	62.5% (15/24)	40.9% (9/22)	53.8% (7/13)	2.15723	2	.34007
12. understanding and accepting cultural differences	83.3% (20/24)	72.7% (16/22)	53.8% (7/13)	3.71009	2	.15645

Table 4 (continued)

	Low	Moderate	High	Critical Value	DF	Significance
13. gaining a better understanding of dating relationships	37.5% (9/24)	27.3% (6/22)	38.5% (5/13)	.69075	2	.70795
14. enhancing my self-esteem	70.8% (17/24)	72.7% (16/22)	61.5% (8/13)	.51688	2	.77226
15. clarifying my values	70.8% (17/24)	50.0% (11/22)	46.2% (6/13)	2.93910	2	.23003
16. exploring long range goals	70.8% (17/24)	77.3% (17/22)	69.2% (9/13)	.35324	2	.83810
17. enhancing my growth as a student	100.0% (24/24)	86.4% (19/22)	69.2% (9/13)	7.73998	2	.02086
18. improving note taking skills for other classes	62.5% (15/24)	54.5% (12/22)	46.2% (6/13)	.94149	2	.62454
19. improving test taking skills	45.8% (11/24)	63.6% (14/22)	53.8% (7/13)	1.46676	2	.48028
20. improving time management skills	75.0% (18/24)	90.9% (20/22)	61.5% (8/13)	4.31043	2	.11588
21. identifying what professors expect	83.3% (20/24)	90.9% (20/22)	76.9% (10/13)	1.29889	2	.52234
22. developing positive attitudes toward learning	83.3% (20/24)	81.8% (18/22)	69.2% (9/13)	1.13583	2	.56670
23. understanding university policies and procedures	87.5% (21/24)	86.4% (19/22)	92.3% (12/13)	.29173	2	.86427
24. developing more positive attitudes toward faculty	87.5% (21/24)	77.3% (17/22)	76.9% (10/13)	1.00754	2	.60425
25. being more accepting of individuals with differing values	95.8% (23/24)	81.8% (18/22)	69.2% (9/13)	4.84886	2	.08853

Appendices

- Appendix A Survey Instrument
- Appendix B Interview Protocol
- Appendix C Preliminary Postcard
- Appendix D Interview Permission Form
- Appendix E ETU 1001 Course Proposal

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FRESHMAN SEMINAR STUDENTS

You were among students who first enrolled in EIU 1001, Freshman Seminar, which was a new course offered in the fall of 1989. The purpose of this questionnaire is to assist in determining the contribution this course is perceived to have made to the quality of your life at Eastern Illinois University. Your responses will provide information for future course planning and will impact the lives of other new students coming to Eastern. Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire.

The number at the right will be used for tracking questionnaires. All responses will remain confidential. # _____

Using the Key below, please circle the response that best describes your perception of the Freshman Seminar experience.

SA - Strongly agree
A - Agree
N - No opinion
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly disagree

THE FRESHMAN SEMINAR EXPERIENCE HAS ASSISTED ME IN:

(Circle Response)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. making a decision to remain in college. | SA A N D SD |
| 2. becoming more involved in various types of campus activities (e.g. student government, student clubs, cultural events, intramurals, etc.). | SA A N D SD |
| 3. finding a support group of peers with whom I could examine common problems. | SA A N D SD |
| 4. making friends within the university environment. | SA A N D SD |
| 5. developing a more positive attitude toward Eastern Illinois University. | SA A N D SD |
| 6. finding resources on campus to help solve problems. | SA A N D SD |
| 7. improving group communication skills, especially verbal assertiveness. | SA A N D SD |
| 8. learning strategies through which I could more effectively manage my finances. | SA A N D SD |
| 9. making informed choices about alcohol and drugs. | SA A N D SD |
| 10. dealing with stress and other mental factors that could have affected my level of success. | SA A N D SD |
| 11. developing better relationships with my roommates. | SA A N D SD |
| 12. understanding and being more accepting of cultural differences of people around me. | SA A N D SD |
| 13. gaining a better understanding of dating relationships. | SA A N D SD |
| 14. enhancing my self-esteem. | SA A N D SD |
| 15. clarifying my values. | SA A N D SD |

***** Please complete both sides of questionnaire. *****

THE FRESHMAN SEMINAR EXPERIENCE HAS ASSISTED ME IN:

(Circle Response)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 16. exploring my long range goals. | SA A N D SD |
| 17. enhancing my growth as a student. | SA A N D SD |
| 18. improving note taking skills for other classes. | SA A N D SD |
| 19. improving test taking skills. | SA A N D SD |
| 20. improving time management skills. | SA A N D SD |
| 21. identifying what professors expected of me. | SA A N D SD |
| 22. developing more positive attitudes toward learning. | SA A N D SD |
| 23. understanding university policies and procedures. | SA A N D SD |
| 24. developing more positive attitudes toward university faculty. | SA A N D SD |
| 25. being more accepting of individuals with values that differ from my own. | SA A N D SD |

26. Who was your instructor in Freshman Seminar, EIU 1001? 1 2 3 4 5
Instructors were:

1. Dr. Jeanne Simpson
2. Dr. Kevin Lasley
3. Dr. Allen Baharlou
4. Dr. John Messer
5. I do not remember

27. Have either of your parents ever attended college? Yes ___ No ___
28. Looking back on the Freshman Seminar experience, do you perceive it to have been useful? Yes ___ No ___
29. Would you be willing to participate in a short interview to provide a more detailed description of the impact of EIU 1001 on your college experience? Yes ___ No ___

If your response was yes, what is your local telephone number? _____

Use the space below for additional comments you wish to share about the course.

Thank you for your assistance in providing data for this study.

Please return this questionnaire by January 29, 1993, to:

Margaret Messer, Graduate Student
Honors Office, Booth House

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Questions

1. A. What do you perceive to be the most significant topic of Freshman Seminar?

B. What single class activity stands out most in your mind?
2. How did Freshman Seminar impact your college experience?
3. Freshman Seminar is designed to promote personal growth experiences. What growth experiences do you perceive to be a result of Freshman Seminar?
4. What college organizations have you participated in and did Freshman Seminar assist you in becoming involved in them or other facets of university life?

a. Greek ☐yes ☐no b. Social ☐yes ☐no c. Professional ☐yes ☐no
d. Academic or Departmental ☐yes ☐no e. University Wide ☐yes ☐no
f. Other _____
5. Have you ever recommended the course to other students? ☐yes ☐no
6. In what ways do you believe that Freshman Seminar is meeting the desired goal?
7. A. Should Freshman Seminar be required of all freshmen?
B. Should it be required of "at risk" students?
8. Are you aware of classmates from Freshman Seminar who left school and if so, why did they leave?
9. As you look back on Freshman Seminar, are there topics or information that were not covered that you believe would have been helpful or should have been included?
10. What are your suggestions for improving Freshman Seminar at Eastern Illinois University.

APPENDIX C
PRELIMINARY POSTCARD

M E M O R A N D U M

To: EIU Students enrolled in EIU 1001 in 1989-90

From: Margaret Messer for Cynthia Nichols, Freshman Seminar
Coordinator

Re: Freshman Seminar Questionnaire

Dear EIU Student,

During your freshman year you completed Freshman Seminar, EIU 1001. The course is now in its fourth year.

As you prepare to graduate from Eastern, you have a unique opportunity to contribute to the evaluation/planning process of Freshman Seminar. In a few days you will receive a short questionnaire designed to allow you to share your perception of the impact of EIU 1001 on your college experience.

You will also have an opportunity to be one of fifteen participants in a one-on-one interview that will allow you to share your views more extensively.

A prompt return of your survey is important. Your response will assist the University in gathering valuable data for a qualitative study that will help mold the direction of future Freshman Seminar classes.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PERMISSION FORM

RESEARCH ETHICS PROTOCOL

(TO BE READ BY INTERVIEWER BEFORE THE INTERVIEW WITH ONE COPY GIVEN TO THE INTERVIEWEE AND ONE COPY TO BE RETAINED BY THE INTERVIEWER)

My name is _____. I am a research assistant on a field study entitled: The Perceived Impact of Freshman Seminar on the Quality of Life of Students Completing the Course AY89-90 At Eastern Illinois University. Margaret Messer is the principle investigator of this research project. The thesis advisor is Dr. Charles Eberly in Educational Psychology and Guidance, phone 581-2400. You may call him if you have additional questions.

Thank you for assisting us in this research project. Your participation in this interview will be very appreciated. Before the interview, we would like to assure you that, as a research participant, you have the following rights:

1. Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.
2. You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.
3. You are free to withdraw from or end this interview at any time.
4. This interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team.
5. Excerpts from this interview may be part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in this report.

Please sign this form to show that you have read this ethics protocol and you understand its contents.

(signature)
(print name please)
(date)

Please send me a copy of the results of this research project. YES NO

Address for those requesting

results: _____

Interviewer: keep signed copy and leave unsigned copy with the respondent)

APPENDIX E

EIU 1001 COURSE PROPOSAL

9-1
Parsons
10-1-88

Course Proposal

1. Catalog Description

- a. Course Number: EIU 1001
- b. Title: Freshman Seminar
- c. Credit: 1-0-1
- d. Term Offered: Fall and Spring
- e. Short Title: Freshman Seminar
- f. Course Description: This course develops student knowledge of university organization, traditions, and methods. It provides a conceptual framework for engaging successfully in the university experience.
- g. Prerequisites: Freshman standing (less than 30 semester hours of earned credit) This course may not be taken C/NC.

Rationale: This course is designed to meet the needs of freshmen students as they make the transition to university life. Such a course seems particularly appropriate because of the traditionally high number of first generation students who attend Eastern.

Because both the material in the course and the need for it are most appropriate for the initial weeks of the student's career, the course has been organized so that it may be completed during the first eight weeks of the semester. The content of the course draws upon the experience of many faculties at other universities where similar courses are being taught.

Because of the extent of the material to be covered, the discussion format of the course, and the inclusion of testing and other types of assignments, it is recommended that each class meeting be for seventy-five minutes, *enrollment limited to 25 per section.*

2. Outline of Course

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week One | Introduction: Making the Transition to College

Understanding the Campus
Readings: Chapters 1, 2, 3 in Gardner and Jewler , <u>College is Only the Beginning: A Student Guide to Higher Education</u> (see 3.b.) |
| Week Two | Study Skills and Time Management
Reading: Chapter 5 in Gardner and Jewler |
| Week Three | Using the Library and Using University Services
Readings: Chapter 4 in Gardner and Jewler
EIU Student Survival Guide
Guest Speakers from and visits to Booth Library, Writing Center, Counseling Center, Computer Center, Reading Center |

- Week Four Living with Other People: Personal Relationships
To Include Roommates, Negotiating Conflicts,
Ethnic Diversity, On and Off Campus Environments
- Developing a Social Life: To Include Social
Organizations, Dating, Community Involvement
Readings: Chapters 10, 11, and 12 in Gardner and
Jewler
- Week Five Developing a Healthy Life Style : Anxiety
Management, Drugs and Alcohol, Student Conduct
Code, Personal Safety
Readings: Chapters 13, 14, and 15 in Gardner
and Jewler.
Guest Speakers from Counseling Center, Student
Judicial Board, Department of Health Studies
- Week Six Making the Best Use of the University:
Cultural Opportunities, Volunteer, Academic,
and Service Organizations
Reading: Chapter 16 in Gardner and Jewler
- Making Ends Meet: Financing a University
Education and Money Management
Reading: Chapter 9 in Gardner and Jewler
- Week Seven Non-Traditional Life on Campus: Minorities,
Disabled and Adult Learners, Part-time
Students and Commuter Students.
Readings: Chapters 19, 20, and 21 in Gardner
and Jewler
- Week Eight A Final Look: What Differences can a College
Education Make ?
Reading: Chapter 22 in Gardner and Jewler
- Choosing a Major - Planning a Career
Readings: Chapters 7 and 8 in Gardner and
Jewler

Evaluation Students will be evaluated on a point system based on attendance, quizzes, examinations, assignments, activities, and completion of writing assignments in a journal.

3. Implementation

- a. Instructors will be recruited from faculty volunteers across the campus. Instructors will receive specialized training and aid in scheduling activities and speakers.

3. Implementation continued

- b. Textbook: Several excellent texts are available but those to be issued to students will be :
 - (1) Gardner, John N. and A. Jerome Jewler. College is Only the Beginning: A Student Guide to Higher Education Belmont, California Wadsworth 1985
 - (2) Academic Support and Retention Committee of Eastern Illinois University EIU Student Survival Manual Eastern Illinois University 1988
 - (3) Supplementary and resource materials will be placed on reserve in Booth Library.
- c. No exceptional costs are anticipated.
- d. Term to be offered: Fall 1989

4. Rationale

- a. Purpose and Need of this course is to strengthen the academic performance, social adjustment, and personal growth of students entering the University, leading to greater student and faculty satisfaction with the educational process and to increased student retention. There is no consistent method by which students may receive information about the organization of a university, its traditions, protocols, requirements, etc. Nor is there currently an opportunity for students to discuss standards of social and interpersonal relationships and development which are thrust upon them as freshmen on the campus of a residential university. Present sources of such information do not consistently include faculty, and frequently omit off-campus, non-traditional, transfer, and commuter students. This course will not replace any current programs for testing, advising, or preregistering students. The content of this course is particularly appropriate for students attending college for the first time.
 - b. The course is intended for freshmen (fewer than 30 s.h.).
 - c. Similarity to existing courses: none. No course will be deleted.
 - d. This course will be an elective for students with less than 30 semester hours of credit.
5. Community College Transfer: Because of the special content of this course relative to Eastern Illinois University a community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course.

9-1
1 Dec 88

Personal Abstract

Margaret Knapp Messer

Family Background

- * Born November 22, 1947 to Calvin Ray Knapp and Edith Marie (Wood) Knapp in Alderson, West Virginia
- * Oldest of eight children
- * First Generation College Student and first in the family to complete a Specialist Degree
- * Married John M. Messer from Crab Orchard, Kentucky
- * Mother of three red headed children, Jeffrey Myers Messer, Jennifer Marie Messer, and Jana Marcy Messer

Educational Background

- * Bachelor of Science in Home Economics Education, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; 1970
- * Master of Arts in Gerontology, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois; 1982
- * Specialist in Education, Student Personnel in Higher Education, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois; 1993

Career Path

- * Home Economics and Science Teacher in Secondary Schools, Berea, Kentucky
- * Assistant Director, Peace Meal Senior Nutrition Program, Charleston, Illinois
- * Executive Director, Moultrie Shelby Senior Services, Sullivan, Illinois
- * Health Educator, Carle Clinic, Urbana, Illinois
- * Graduate Assistant, Academic Assistance Center and Honors Programs, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois